

ORDER IN CHAOS

THE GROUP DYNAMIC advances a recipe for order. The order of the family unit, for instance, will assume different forms when brother mates with sister (the CONSANGUINE family); when brother mates with sister, cousin and the wives of other brothers (PUNALUAN); when there is single pairing without exclusive cohabitation (SYNDYASMIAN); when a man takes several wives (PATRIARCHAL involving polygamy); and when single pairing occurs with exclusive cohabitation (MONOGAMIAN). But the order imposed by such family units on social and cultural elaborations will also differ.

Among hunter-gatherers the family unit generally includes from 4 to 60 individuals. The band, or most primitive social group, is composed of 50 to 150 members who are not all related through blood or kinship. The normative breeding unit of related bands of hunter-gatherers (the tribe) may comprise as many as 500 to 600 people. The village (or social elaboration of the tribe), ideally harbours a common dialect, culture and religious organization.

The city compounds the principles of this organization in a hierarchical corporation of classes separating tradesman from farmer, which inevitably results in the establishment of a distinct and often exclusive ruling class (*civitas*, founded on territory and property, theoretically displacing *societas*, founded on people, as the governing principle of the city). Civilization (city culture) developed from the determination to produce an excess of food and goods for trade, seeking optimal security for the greatest number of people through co-operation. The synergetic imperative of such community patently embraces an ideal of harmonic co-existence.

The laws established by the governing class, thereby, may be seen to be essentially social before moral (even during the formative period of city culture when the rulers were the religious leaders of the tribe) – the problems of property and sanitation presenting the predominant concerns for the administrations of all early cities. Property in turn creates poverty, requiring laws of servitude and debt; while prosperity invites attack, necessitating fortification and rules of engagement (the exercise of force in the defence of a settlement constituting one of the most fundamental responsibilities of government).

As city culture developed, the order portended by its law became increasingly complex. Establishing an order for civility demands the refinement of ethical reflex in the citizen increasingly sensible, in light of these laws, to the consequences of action in the context of community. Children inherit order through custom, learning the laws a slap at a time – a callous simplification, perhaps, of the culture of the increasingly responsible group dynamic.

The most essential resource to any group dynamic is its people. Whether progress occurs or not, the ‘evolution’ of the group dynamic from nuclear family to cosmopolitan social nexus, describes a *progression* of equity in human resources. Establishing a recipe for order capable of inciting a maximum number of co-operative individuals to optimal production, requires progressive insight. The greater one’s grasp of the aims and laws of society, the more indispensable one becomes – moreso the larger and more complex the group. Thus an offence against the highly educated citizen has historically drawn greater censure than one against a common labourer (the guy who discovers how to beat scurvy more valued than the guy who grows the lime) – the group thereby assessing social significance in civic terms.

Hierarchical pre-eminence, however, has left a legacy of pontifical orders which may be viewed from the democratic perspective as regressive. Supreme authority or autocracy

occurring in its pure form as monarchy (in its corrupt form as tyranny, despotism or dictatorship); and rule by an elite advancing the concept of aristocracy (which degenerates to oligarchy or fascism), demand the subordination of the citizen; where democracy – the rule of the people (republic) – strives for social equanimity. This is arguably a more responsible form of government (determined to address an ever-increasing multiplicity of social issues, individual and civic) – instilling in its constituents an unprecedented refinement of ethical reflex.

The earliest democracies, or governments of consent, were conditionally limited in Greece to city-states, to accommodate the congregation of the entire voting public for debate, within vocal range. The 'social contract' introduced by Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*, 1651) and elaborated by John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau, displaced the traditional deed of divine rule, with a governing authority in 'western' society increasingly dependent on the will or consent of the people. In the United States, Britain, France and Canada such constituent authority extends to the creation of their fundamental laws or constitution (by elected representatives of the people).

Conversely, anarchy ("without government") rejects entirely the necessity of state control over the individual – fundamentalist regimes not infrequently mistaking democratic governments as anarchic because of the licence extended to constituents. While totalitarian administration, presuming the pre-eminence of the state, exercises unlimited authority over its citizens.

Just government, in its determination to strike a balance between individual freedom and legislated constraint, ideally requires checks on its sovereign authority to direct the state. The elected leader answers to the people – represented either by Congress or Parliament – which in turn answers to the Judiciary. The highest authority remains that of the Law, although in the antecedent body politic comprised of the

three estates of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and the Commons, the church assumed its ancient prerogative as arbiter of just social order (priest as judge of right living).

The judgments of Hammu-*rabbi* (Lord of Justice; sixth king of the First Dynasty of Babylon, ca 1792–1750 BC) preserve 282 laws revised from Sumerian antecedents, several of which recur in Hebrew scripture. The divine temper of ancient law, further attested in the Covenant of God, not only had its origin in the Middle East but prevails to this day in the fabric of divine order maintained by descendants of the original lawmaker priests.

Fundamentalists such as the Puritan pilgrims, reject the abrogation of temporal authority by officers of church and state in the administration of God's laws. Protestant antipathy to the omniscience of the Pope occasioned a schism in the Christian church no less militant than the revulsion of the Taleban toward lax observance of Allah's laws – licence which the fundamentalist Moslem clairvoyantly identifies as the germinal malaise of American 'order'.

The Land of Liberty (even more than the insidious concept of licence) threatens their devout society with the spectre of a godless, insistently material contagion irresistibly seductive to its youth. The apparent indifference to godly rectitude in this purgatory of licentiousness – the rapacity of the 'free enterprise', the carnal addictions and moral decay not only abounding but *celebrated* in American 'culture' – convince the insular divine of the need to oppose so diabolical an affront to all he holds sacred. At the core of his distemper, however, lies the certitude that the evident immorality of the liberal path derives expressly from the abandonment of divine law.

Conflict has less to do with people than culture. Order in the commune is effectively disrupted by the introduction of one refusing to do chores. Defensible as his position may be, the dissenter cannot justifiably invoke the precept 'live and let live' where his habits disrupt the group dynamic at large.

It is irresponsible in its obstinate determination to measure the world by his own standards.

The arguable improvement of the democratic recipe for order (over theocratic, autocratic and aristocratic models of government), seems not to have been entertained by the Taleban divines in their *jihad* against appearances. Western society has invoked in its precepts a far more complex and ideally responsible form of government than those who adhere so stridently to the atavism of a simple model of divine justice, may ever comprehend let alone appreciate. Not 300 years old, the democratic experiment is rabidly indicted for its perceived assault on an ancient order, without the willingness or ability to recognize the potential for social improvement – condemned at puberty for its excesses, without a concession to its promise.

The primitive expression of civility preferred by such morally vigilant regimes as the sanctimonious Taleban may be exemplified in their consideration toward women. Which model presents the more palatable recipe for order? Women as chattel unworthy of education who may be incinerated for simply conversing with strange men? Or a culture dedicated – despite the inevitable disruptions of irresponsible beneficiaries – to the preservation of human liberty at all cost? Taleban intolerance for the faith of others, as evidenced by the intractable demolition of ancient Buddhist monuments in Afghanistan, further colours the ‘indisputable pre-eminence’ of their ‘anoointed’ vision of civility.

The World Trade Center represented a comparable icon of ‘heathen’ obsessions. Towering higher than any other man-made structure in the land, it might be perceived as a presumption on divinity (through proximity to God). It was not only a communications hub and a centre of financial trade, but more insidiously represented a bastion of global imperialism – the symbolic *conductor* of capital democracy. Trite and insolent as it may seem, it would not

be inappropriate for a revived patriarchy to envision the conceit of its prominent erection in emphatically phallic terms (brandishing the menacing symbol of western promiscuity for reproduction, which threatens the perpetuation of cultures and customs world-wide). And (stereotypes aside), its concentration of financial tenants might arguably have harboured the greatest number of Jews in one place in the entire country.

Pacific platitudes such as 'turn the other cheek' or 'an eye for an eye reduces the state to a country of the blind' say nothing about future assaults. A progressive recipe for order is under attack from fanatics determined to become their grandfathers, megalomaniacs insensible to the history and promise of the democratic vision they defy. Their desire to make time go backwards has driven more men to extremes than the lust for lardy lucre, a fate the western world owes it to posterity to resist with every means at its disposal. Just as the sceptical tradition gave rise to the computer, the trial of representative government primes the inexorable progress of order to ever-more equitable ideals.

The concentration of wealth, however, by corporate megalomaniacs threatening both the world economy and ecology, produces inexcusable disorder – the express result of *capital* democracy, not the democratic ideal. As things stand we appear to be regressing to feudal conditions, a tragedy all responsible individuals must address if we are to survive as a civilized dynamic. Yet the disparity between rich and poor in the Middle East is no better, wealthy Asian autocrats showing no greater concern for the commoner in their countries than the robber barons have traditionally advanced in the west (*cf*, Brunei...) – arguably supporting the suspicion that the Taleban antipathy has less to do with material exploitation than spiritual and cultural erosion.

War on terrorism means war against Muslim extremists in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Palestine and Libya (and maybe even Iran). Their war against the infidel leaves no option.

Judæo-Christian doctrine may likewise be cited for the eradication of *their* enemies, but again only extremists choose to take the invocations of Yahweh against the Canaanites in Exodus XXIII, 23/4 as a literal directive.

The obliteration of people because of their culture will never stop being monstrous, but the deliberate targeting of those with superior knowledge and insight into their culture strikes at the very essence of intellectual order – particularly when those aiming the weapons oppose the rights to free speech, thought and will. The struggles against inflexible authority have been too heroic for the beneficiaries of the sceptical revolution to abandon their hard-won legacy to question authority, in capitulation to rank demagogues who fail even to recognize the benefits, as they terrorize the architects of a responsible posterity.

There is no alternative. The masquerade of a holy war projects a facetious image of western order as essentially godless and corrupt. The spirit of democracy, however, is no less devoted and far more compassionate than the holy order of the repressive Taleban regime. Islam flourishes in the west just as the concept of liberty knows no boundary, yet a fundamental misinterpretation of the essence of the Koran blindly turns spirit-fighters into common terrorists as it aims to reduce the vision of the democratic edifice to senseless rubble.

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